

BOZART

AND CONTEMPORARY VERSE

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BOZART

THE BI-MONTHLY POETRY REVIEW

EDITED BY ERNEST HARTSOCK



SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER, 1927

VOL. I

No. 1

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INTRODUCING BOZART

Several years ago when H. L. Mencken delivered a playful but pointed thrust at the South by calling it the "Sahara of Bozart" (*Bozart* being an ingenious contraction for *beaux arts*), he probably little realized the dire publicity which his term would receive. Mr. Mencken has since had occasion to modify his statement as he has beheld the progress of certain Southern authors toward literary independence. The associations centering about the title "Bozart" have, despite their banality, been of sufficient currency to make the use of this title for a poetry review a comprehended gesture.

BOZART is designed to be not a sectional venture but a national one; the editor of BOZART, having beheld the fatal course of many Southern magazines, conceives the idea that others have been too section-conscious in their attempts. Consequently, BOZART is to be dedicated to no exploitation of home talent nor to the jingoism actuated by sentimental lovers of a too well-remembered past. The editor will strive to give every voice that deserves hearing, space in this magazine, be the voice old or new, Southern or Northern, black or white, provided that the voice be sincere, courageous, and intelligent.

The editor of BOZART believes in the South as a producing point and a publishing point. He further believes that much talent now dormant in the South may be cultivated by a magazine which stands for intelligence and tolerance. He has no prejudices against any form of poetry; he welcomes free verse or rhymed verse on any topic which can be treated in a poetic and effective manner. He especially desires for publication any critical articles on poetry, music, and art, which are original and sound. He invites all poets to contribute not only their poems but their opinions, which he will take for what they seem to be worth.

As with the "Reviewer" in the days of Emily Clark, so with BOZART: Payment will be in fame but not in specie. However, there will be substantial prizes offered from time to time, the first of which is outlined below.

BOZART SONNET PRIZE

The Bozart Press, publishers, offer a prize of \$25 for the best sonnet, Petrarchan or Shakespearean, which is published in BOZART, Volume one, September-October, 1927, through July-August, 1928. This contest to be decided by the editorial board of BOZART, award to be announced in the first issue of Vol. 2. All poets are eligible.

Bozart

"The Bi-Monthly Poetry Review"

Edited by ERNEST HARTSOCK

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Passion

John Funk, Jr.

TO PASSION

O flower of darkness in whose veins
 No blood but the bell of laughter rains,
 And from whose upward crystal spire
 The orchid stars drip ghosts of fire,
 Unflood the gold glooms of your eyes
 To burn the torrents of black skies,
 Unfold your rainbow of warm wings
 Across the rapture moonlight sings,
 And close me thick in the crucial tide
 Of your arms where I would be crucified!

—ERNEST HARTSOCK.

This is a specimen page from the *Wandering Eros* anthology of love poetry, ready
 September 15th.

DARK HALO

Death is the shadow of the hawk
Above us always as we walk;
And we are rabbits in a meadow
That play beneath the great wings' shadow.

We nibble, nibble . . . and forget
The seal of darkness on us set.
Or one of us, it may be, dozes. . . .
Or two touch little twitching noses.

Meanwhile above us evermore
The terrible wings of darkness soar;
And the plumed panther of the air
Forever sees us blank and bare.

The yellow, cold, unwinking eyes
Are always on us from the skies;
The talons are alert to stir
Implacable in blood-dabbled fur.

Yet he alone is man who dares
Look up and see the death that stares:
Yes, it is grandeur, majesty,
And triumph, to look up—and see!

And more: It brings our transient course
The shock of doom, the seal of force,
And makes even lives of men like me
A Sophoclean tragedy.

The challenge of the shadow flings
Strength on us, like archangels' wings:
It makes our sordidness sublime—
Eternity rebuking Time!

—E. MERRILL ROOT.

FOR A SEX NOVEL

Read this story in your bed.
Let it tear your heart and head.
Let it show you what you are.
It will tease you. It will jar.
Swallow all its words in fright.
You will not forget this night.
And after you have found this book delicious,
Suppress it publicly, and call it vicious!

—HENRY HARRISON.

SONG OF THE VIRGINIA COLONIAL
PLANTER

Grow, tobacco, grow—
Ships are on the sea:
Give me wealth to trade
For their finery!

Grow me a cocked hat,
Grow me silver spurs
And a coat to ride
With Reynard's followers!

For my lady's sake
Grow, tobacco, grow:
Velvets, bombazine,
Ermine, calico!

She within my fields
Sees but ostrich plumes,
Bonnets of Leghorn,
Parisian perfumes!

You are Windsor chairs
And mahogany
And a harpichord
And Flemish tapestry!

Tutors for our young—
Scholars of renown—
Yea, a passage too
Across to London town!

Shall our collars know
Of Burgundy a lack?
Grow us St. Croix rum
And sparkling Frontignac!

Grow, tobacco, grow—
Ships are on the sea:
If the harvest fail
What have they for me?

—DANIEL HENDERSON.

HERITAGE

Tradition tells that once a sire of mine
Followed the sea . . . and I have always yearned
For snow-capped waves; the pungent scent of brine.
Often in fevered dreams I have returned
From inland plains and deserts of deep gold
To whitened beaches—heard the mystic sea
Forever blending sound and wind, age-old,
In minor tones of silver harmony.

But I, the ocean's thrall, am closed around
By towering walls, a burning city street . . .
I who forever listen for the sound
Of moving water hear swift, tramping feet;
See hurried throngs. Why did my ancient sire
Bequeathe me this unquenchable desire?

—LOUISE CRENSHAW RAY.

REVERSION

Mary Magdalene, out of whom went seven sins,
Surged with the multitude,
To hear John preaching in the wilderness,
And to see his raiment of gold camel's hair.
She heard his poignant voice pleading—
Calling men and women for repentance.
Her eyes melted tremulously into his,
And, with a hand on her tight heart,
She hurried on saying:
"He is no 'reed shaken with the wind';
He is a god."

"I was muddled with his lithe limbs,
His azure, sandaled feet,
His sun-bronzed hair,
His ripened-berry mouth,
Until I saw the Christ
In his celestial eyes."

—KATE SLAUGHTER MCKINNEY.

THE FAILURE

He failed—and yet a spark of bright desire
Lit by the embers of his lifelong fire,
Kindled in comrade souls, and grew and grew
Into a blaze that shaped the world anew.

—STANTON A. COBLENTZ.

JAZZBO

Age has dirtied the windows,
spiders have webbed each pane;
Light sneaks through the alley door
and hangs in the white-washed room
Where Jazzbo stands
in piles of soggy feathers,
breaking chickens' necks,
dipping chickens in scalding water,
and rubbing feathers off.
Six hundred hens and pullets
in coops, like men in cells,
sit stupidly, crooning softly.
Jazzbo stands by his scalding pot,
wearing sopping pants,
his great brown arms,
and arching chest, and sloping back,
and knotted stomach muscles,
naked, slick with sweat.
For eleven years he's been dressing chickens,
liquor stopped his prizefighting,
and testing white hot pipes
as they came from flaming pits
wasn't worth the risk,
So he dresses chickens
in the back of a produce house.
When he is through in the afternoons,
he sloshes water about the place,
wipes off his cleaning table,
shovels up the feathers,
and sweeps the concrete floor.
In the grey dusk he bathes himself
with a bucket full of water
beside his barrels of salted fryers.
White soap suds
stream over the blue lights
on the rich brown skin
of his perfect, glowing body.
And soap suds mashed from his kinky hair
are like bubbling foam
squeezed out of seaweed.

—JUDY RAYFORD.

POEMS FOR LOVERS*

YOU ARE THE BURNISHED GOLD

You are the sunset's burnished gold,
That glorifies the dying day,
You are the fires upon my hearth
When winds are cold and skies are gray.

You are the flame within my heart
That quickens hours dead and dull.
You are the quince-tree on my lawn,
Fragrant and white and beautiful.

—ELKANAH EAST TAYLOR.

I HAD A LOVER IN A SUMMER WOOD

I had a lover in a summer wood.
The sky poured sympathy, the wind was good.
Beneath the tremor of our quivering limbs
Earth sang her ancient elemental hymns.

Turn back the quiet pages of the years,
Pass softly by the lines of twilight tears,
Ghost-chapters holding consolations gone,
Turn to the brave young pages of the dawn!

Let me remember in a frame of trees
A picture of the sky's blue clarities.
Let me remember laughter of the grasses
When with her silver skirts the June rain passes.

Let me remember now that life was good.
I had a lover in a summer wood.

—LUCIA TRENT.

THIS LOVELIER SADNESS

There is a sadness lovelier to me
Than sudden peace, or any blessed thing,
The sadness on your lips in ecstasy,
The frail white dream of your surrendering.

There is a sadness lovelier to me
Than naked trees against the amber skies,
The sadness of your brave tranquillity,
The Godhead I have worshiped in your eyes.

—LUCIA TRENT.

*Poems on this page will be included in the forthcoming
Wandering Eros Anthology of Love Poetry.

THE WIDER LOVE

(*To My Wife*)

I would meet Christs on every avenue
And hear each robin echo God's own throat,
If I saw all as well as I see you
And heard as clearly their essential note.
How each man wills to mount the cross, the only
Stair to heaven, and is thereby fulfilled;
There is no hell except in being lonely:
I then would know truths now but half distilled.
For universal love shall surely flower
And hold us all as you and I each other.
I have no fears, not in this breathless hour,
Aware that every woman is God's mother.

—RALPH CHEYNEY.

GETHSEMANE

One day you were absurd:
Oh many times no doubt,
But this one time—how hard to blot it out!
Deep in the forest shade we crept,
With head upon my lap you slept.
I believe that God once felt the same
When He to that great Week-end came.
He found Love's labor very good—
But did He sleep within the wood?

—EVELYN M. WATSON.

"MY LOVER'S BEAUTY"

My lover's beauty is a thing of fear . . .
As mountain summits rise to fathomless space,
Or as one looks upon the wide sky's face
Sensing infinitude . . . When he is near
The shadows of Eternity are here
And vistas of the Sublime in his embrace,
Strange, Silent intimations which I trace
In his beauty, which is graver year by year.
Strange loveliness of love, strange terror, too,
Death is not stranger than my lover's face,
O Beauty that is terrible as fire,
As grave as sea-depths, old yet ever new,
Piercing as pain; sweet as a scented place.
(Men died for Helen's beauty once in Tyre.)
—BLANCHE SHOEMAKER WAGSTAFF.

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THE FALL OF THE CURTAIN

And always I strive to distil
Love's curious, delicate essence,
A rapture sufficient to fill
The wide world with its sweet evanescence.

But words are maliciously made,
Pale, faltering, fragile, uncertain,
And the best of the drama is played
Just after the fall of the curtain.

—GAMALIEL BRADFORD.

WHAT TO SAY

Say not this deed shall quicken every dead,
Bring lovers back revisiting a dream—
Let not that boast be said
To make this moment more than it would seem.
But rather with an old friend's triumph say:
I have held you in my arms
Part of a night and day.

—CHARLES DIVINE.

LOVELY THE EARTH

Lovely the earth that autumn when we met:
The woods a flame before they turned to grey—
Gone from me with the hours of yesterday
Deep is the silence I shall not forget.

O are you near when petalled blossoms blow
Over the April meadow to the hills,
Where tossing wind bends down the daffodils?
Beyond the purple mist,—do you still know

What once we knew with wondrous surety
Pulsing upon a living planet's breast?
I think of you as torn life thinks of rest,—
Lofty as stars, deep as a midnight sea!

White ecstasy drifts down the aisles of night,
And silent lips cry to a winging height.

—GRACE EVELYN BROWN.

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Wandering Eros Anthology of Love Poetry.

CONQUEROR

Shall I go now, to meet my Love,
With sword or roses white?
The sword, that slays,
Finds feverish days,
It meets its dead at night.

So, roses, I will roses take,
Although Love heeds them not.
And cast the sword
The high stars toward,
And, smiling, be forgot.
—KATE SLAUGHTER MCKINNEY.

DUET

Leap to me with fire and flame
To burn within the hungry circle of my arms.
Kindle my cold white throat
With the unquenchable torches of your flower-
mouth
The while my fingers play their ardent music
Over the aching delicate spheres that are your
breasts,
Your two exquisite worlds,
Young . . . consummate . . .
In conflagration.
Lie near . . . oh near and unextinguished;
Let my eagerness be bound
With taut silk ribbons, silver ribbons;
And sing your breathless song with mine.
Let us forge our unspent cymbal-songs,
My beautiful beloved,
In an unforgettable wreath,
To crown the exaltation of our godhood.
—PHILIP GRAY.

ADVENTURESS

A form of stately loveliness,
A face cold as a star;
Red hates and white amenities
Bloom in a crystal jar.
—JASPER BARNETT COWDIN.

*Poems on this page will be included in the forthcoming
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DANSE MACABRE

He would create the epic of the age:
Steeped in life's lethal tragedy, tonight
He would write
Of endless feud that is our heritage.

And so began. Fantastic shadows threw
Mocking macabre figures on his wall,
A dancing thrall
Which only dawn dissolved in rose and blue.

His pen lay quiet; he would write no more. . . .
And when they found him, moist across his paper
A merrier caper
Of light verse than the age had known before.

—BENJAMIN MUSSER.

THE PAMPERED WOMAN

In her white curtained parlor,
Shut away from life,
She thinks herself Fate's special saint.
What dreams she of the strife

That rends the consciousness of men
Who battle there below,
Who meet and fight with human wolves?
Who every hour go

In an arena, just as real
As any in old Spain.
The wounds and blood are in their souls,
She can not see the stain.

In calmness she accepts the gifts
They bring at close of day,
And offers her cool rose-rouged lips
As bounteous ample pay!

—ELLEN M. CARROLL.

CLOUD-SHADOWS

Like shadows cast upon a veiled-green bay
By opal clouds, drifting to some far goal;
The memory of one brief October day
Darkens the mirror of my soul.

—LOUISE CRENSHAW RAY.

"I AM A WOMAN OF RIVERS AND
OF WINDS"

I am a woman of rivers and of winds;
And, since I can remember, this low door
Has framed my dreaming where that shoal rescinds
The river. I heard winds speak long before
I sensed the music of my mother's words.
Today they talk of waters and of sky,
And set the osiers swinging like white birds,
And tap the scarlet willows' leaves, and sigh.

Ever I hear the tide of air that spins,
Talking . . . talking . . . mystical and low.
Someday I shall leave this house when spring
begins . . .
I shall not say farewell, but I shall go
On soundless feet across the river's bars
To find the paths winds beat through fields of
stars!

—FLOSSIE FAITH SHEAD.

BALLAD OF A NEW VILLON

They are closing in, John Henry,
The law-dogs loudly bay;
Where will you hide your frightened heart
Tonight, where will you stay?

The Church cries out, John Henry,
Her curses on your head;
Where will you find a blessed grave,
Cross-marked, when you are dead?

The hounds close in, the saints press out,
And you are crushed between.
What will you do, John Henry,
With none to intervene?

*The Church can tear my soul from me,
The Law can wield its thong;
But they shall know that, even so,
I'll still retain my song.*

*When they have worked their mighty will,
With life choked by a string
I'll belly my way up bell's high hill,
And sing! and sing! . . .*

—BENJAMIN MUSSER.

THE INTRUDER

You cannot keep
This one intruder out!
He lingers in the home
Of hope and dread,
He walks with unbeliever
And devout,
And peers into
The windows of the dead.

He stands beside
You when the dawn is chill,
Bides with you through the hush
Of cobalt noon,
Whispers to you when shadows
Hide the hill,
Or calls to you
Across the sea, the dune.

Who is this old,
Mysterious enemy
Whose presence every joy
Can quench and flout?
Who thrusts himself wherever
You may be?
"Old Love?"—*you say—*
Nay, it is cruel doubt!

—JOHN RICHARD MORELAND.

FOREBODING

Proprietary passion burns in you—
They trouble you, the loves of my dead past,
You who would be my first love and my last;
Lord of my life—past, present, future, too!

But what enchantments, whose endearing ways
Once held you, wake in me no jealousy—
Who you once loved, what is that now to me?
I lay no liens on your yesterdays.

Nay, rather I would have you cherish yet
And think of them sometimes with tenderness,
The women who leaned once to your caress—
I would not have you utterly forget . . .

Because, beloved, oh! because of this—
Some day I shall be one who knew your kiss!

—ROSELLE MERCIER MONTGOMERY.

PASTURE ON PARNASSUS

By ERNEST HARTSOCK

Copper Sun, by Countee Cullen (*Harper and Bros.*)

The second volume of Cullen's poems supasses the first chiefly in the courage to be wise, wise in a rather passionate way. The book is a curious illustration of putting the best foot forward, for the ardent race-consciousness of Cullen excites his sincerest verse, and some that follows, especially the *Juvenilia*, might well have been omitted. "Threnody for a Brown Girl" has perhaps the most beautiful movement of any of the poems in the collection. And it is a quixotic muse which allows the compressed beauty of "The Spark" to stand next to the ordinary rhyming of "Song of the Rejected Lover." Cullen's work is often eloquent, usually clever, and always melodious. He needs to learn to avoid the pleasant temptation of publishing some of his trivial pieces; because at his best he is possessed of a style that is not only wise but vigorous, musical, and opulent. The emotional illustrations by Charles Cullen are exquisite and exotic interpretations.

The Women at Point Sur, by Robinson Jeffers (*Boni & Liveright*)

The hectic adventures of the Rev. Dr. Barclay, out, like Diogenes, in the search of honesty, form an exciting and brilliant narrative poem, climaxing in several catastrophes of terse and terrible realism. As a preacher of moral decay and the ominous importance of sex in determining a theology, Jeffers is unsurpassed. The characters may be slightly hysterical at times and they may be obsessed with the morbid eroticism of Spoon River, but they are true to the highest criteria of intense tragedy. The symphonies of Jeffers like those of Strauss demand many instruments, and often produce a drastic, almost maddening, music as in the tumultuous storms of the Pacific coast which symbolize and intensify the exalted insanity of Dr. Barclay. In its unusual power of sustaining interest, and in its powerful descriptive rapidity, this is a significant book of poetry.

The Traveller, by Iris Tree (*Boni & Liveright*)

It is indeed interesting that Miss Tree has preserved the original dates at which these poems were written, inasmuch as the chronology indicates her growth and tendencies especially well. Her later style, which abjures prepositions and turns adjectives into verbs rather boldly, is largely impressionistic. Like Hart Crane, she delights in a luxuriance of intellectual metaphor, and has a brilliant command of words. Like Crane, too, she lacks something important to say, tending almost entirely to description. "To Time Before Sleeping" or "The Castle" illustrate her work at its most definitely artistic, wherein she bends her imagism into traditional

forms. Her London sketches are vivid and accurate. Her portraits have incisive economy, a characteristic often exaggerated in her technique which permits such coinages as "shadowly." The intense fecundity of her imagination is almost grotesque.

Lost Eden, by Merrill Root (*Unicorn Press*)

Among the many voices of the younger generation of poets, perhaps no one tongue is so preeminently individual as that of Merrill Root. His individuality is of that variety which, although showing shades of influence, surmounts all currents of pressure. Root is in many respects still the apostle of Robert Frost; his fascination with the earth and the simply terrestrial, illustrate this. Yet there is a strain of mysticism in the rich, fragrant, loamy detail of his work; a mysticism suggestive of Blake at his more grotesque moments, or of portions of Francis Thompson. The "Hound of Heaven" has perhaps become a Unicorn. His symbolism is ever-present, a sort of vital skein from which the shroud of earth is woven, fresh, luxuriant, intense. His voice, too, rises in sharp and glaive-keen protest against social and intellectual shams, which seem to him alien to the fruitful spirit of a benevolent Nature. He often resorts to satire which is pungent and powerful. His meters are shifting, often irregular, with occasional loose rhymes; but the effect produced is one of decisive spontaneity.

Hero and Leander, by Brooks More (*Cornhill Press*)

Bound in paper and prefaced by a review said to be written by Norman Easterbrook, this wandering bit of mediocrity makes not a bow but a boast before the public. "Brookes More," we learn, "is the voice of one crying in the wilderness of jazz and *vers libre* urging the deluded ones to turn from the way of the mountebank and return to the strait path of poetry." Certainly Mr. More is crying, and in the wilderness, from which he will probably never emerge. *Hero* is made by Mr. More to tell Leander:

"For those bad priests first stripped me of all clothes,
Intending so to conquer my reserve."

Goodness! and to think that any number of college professors have read this and approved it verbally on the blurb-sheet, including Prof. L. T. More (strange similarity of names!) and Prof. Irving *Babbitt* of Cambridge. Like Alice McFarland with her ambitious "Journal of American Poetry" in Charlotte, Mr. More is determined to stamp out free verse with all four feet; stamp collectors take note.

Sonnets, by Amory Hare (*Macmillan*)

With the exception of occasional inversions, the poetry of Amory Hare is smooth, calm, sensitive, but not unusual. Death, in these sonnets, is a Black Cat, which, true to precedent, exhausts all nine lives in remaining gracefully obscure.

Dawn Stars, by Lucia Trent (*Henry Harrison*)

This volume of delicate lyrics, which is fraught with a more than usual loveliness, is the work of a sensitive and penetrating mind. Miss Trent's rhymed verses, which are surer in their verbal melody than her free verse poems, are almost always frequented by a wistful and eager music. The quality most needed to complete the power of her poetic grasp is emotional firmness; she sometimes yields to the feminine alternative of tenderness, with a leaning to "lovely" and kindred words. However, her lyric gift is one of the first order, and her work shows steady, poised progression.

Touch and Go, by Ralph Cheyney (*Henry Harrison*)

The foremost of the poets of protest in the new social movement in American poetry is Ralph Cheyney. His first volume indicates his brilliant command of irony and sharp satire; with political, social, and religious intolerance there is no compromise in his work. His interest in melodious and artistic diction is sometimes overpowered by the zeal of the prophet; but his most humanly beautiful work is not as a seer but as an imaginative word-artist as in "A Lover for Death."

The Lone Adventurer, by Stanton A. Coblentz (*Unicorn Press*)

Mr. Coblentz has achieved a gentle and dignified treatment in the lengthy poem which constitutes this volume. The romantic struggle of idealism to ultimate failure is affectingly chronicled in the main. Occasional lapses in the conversation, and rhymes that sometimes use a Chaucerian expedient to contrive their contortion, do not seriously mar the smooth tone of the verse. The author handles pathos well and produces some moving episodes by his reticence; his "purple patches" are generally lavender—but so are lilacs.

MASKS

Because your heart
Is young, is gay,
You sing sad little
Songs today.

I sing my gladdest
Songs tonight,—
A broken heart
Must be polite.

—BENJAMIN MUSSER.